The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Jaroslav Pelikan:

The Blessed Mother

Douglas Horton • God Loved the World

Harold E. Fey • The Person We Know

Henry Kuizenga • Stuck with Christ

J. A. Davidson • The World's Conscience

L. C. Rudolph • Seeing Our Size

Richard E. Sigler • Are Funerals Christian?

JOHN C. HARPER • THE PEWS TALK BACK

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The Pulpit

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PULPIT POST

From the Beginning

SIR: I am asking you to discontinue my subscription to The Pulpit. This is not because of dissatisfaction but because I am just getting old in spite of myself.

You may be interested to know that I have before me the Number One copy published in October, 1929. My wife and I have read every copy together through the years. It has been of great value to me and I wish to thank you for all the help you have given me.

It may be a mark of age but we think that we are not producing the preachers of twenty-five years ago: Merton S. Rice, Lynn Harold Hough, Bishop Edwin Hughes, Edgar Dewitt Jones, Harry Emerson Fosdick, S. Parks Cadman and such.

Anyway, as I say "Good-by" I thank God for The Pulpit.

MARSHALL W. HOYT
First Presbyterian Church
Flint, Michigan

The Spark

SIR: Whether I was more alert and receptive to the message, or whether the articles in the January Pulpit were actually objectively above average in worth, I cannot say. This I do know: many of the articles and sermons struck fire in me which flamed considerably more brightly than usually happens. Thank you for the flint.

LUTHER BAKER
Jason Lee Methodist Church
Salem, Oregon

And the Challenge

SIR: I just wanted you to know that I appreciated the heart-searching and thought-provoking article (April) by Lee C. Moorehead on "How Free Is the Pulpit?"

It underscored the principle: freedom means responsibility as well as opportunity and privilege. To be sure, preaching the living Word of God is a terrific responsibility.

No minister, of whatever name or creed, can read this article without aspiring to be a better spokesman for God.

AVERILL M. CARSON
Dewitt Community Church
Dewitt, Michigan

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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Memo:

I'VE known for a long time now that there would be a breaking point — that someone would speak of a "warm church" just once too often and the arch-Protestant I would go off like a Roman candle. I've tried, honestly I've tried to be sympathetic and understanding; I've tried to respond in a glow to all the preachers who have been in such a passion to create "warm" churches. But it's no use. I can't stomach it any longer, so let me get it off my chest (I'm built funny, I guess).

Of course, it may just be that I *am* built funny inside, and that accounts for my revulsion. It could be that it is only my prickly, chilly old psyche that is revolted by what it seems to me the warm-church aficionados are after. If so, I have no business generalizing on my own negativities.

But I wonder. I wonder first how you tell when a church is "warm." Just where do you insert the thermometer?

Then, I wonder what makes a church "warm." Some that covet the thermal reputation seem to feature a fairly banal, back-slapping camaraderie, with much very square joking between pastor and menfolk — the latter obviously humoring the former, who (they assume) would be chilled to his rigid bones by the jokes they *really* think funny. Minister and men, naturally, are bored to distraction by the whole phony business, but in the name and for the sake of warmth they grin and guffaw on. With the womenfolk in such a hutch, the minister is breezy and boyish and the "girls" are alleged to love it. At least, they squeal a lot and act regularly aghast. Here, the chummy church is the warm church.

Another warm church tries for its temperature by slaving over a hot stove. The church thinks itself as warm as the covered dishes it features on Wednesday nights, or the paper cups of coffee it proffers after service on Sunday. The heat is generated by chomping jaws and by the cheek-by-jowl, hip-by-haunch proximity of nice people who would like each other whether any of them were Christians or not but who, when they like each other over food around a trestle table in a church basement, imagine that the cuisine somehow elevates their unruffled native affection into Christian love. Here, the chewing church is the warm church.

The only trouble with such warm churches is that they leave me utterly cold. And I refuse to believe that I am alone in my chill. I know too many of my contemporaries who avoid such churches exactly because they are offended by all the synthetic warmth pumped up by hand-shakes, fanned up by back-slaps, stoked up by meatloaf and milky coleslaw.

It is obvious what lies behind the yen of many for a palpably warm church — the chilliness of our times, the draftiness of our particular corridor in history, the cold damp that rises from the well of the future. But for fewer and fewer people will there be any lasting reassurance in that nervous clutching at each other which is too often mistaken for fellowship. The laughs in the chummy church are ringing awfully hollow already. The yacking, yumming jaws in the chewing church are getting awfully tired.

And it's a good thing they are. For our reassurance is not in each other but in the Lord God Almighty. And you don't address him familiarly (little hope in a God you can be offhand with) but with reverence and in awe. It is in the hush and gravity of worship that God sustains us, it is in the careful reading and thoughtful hearing of his Word that he nourishes us, it is in the mystery and mysticism of the sacraments that he enfolds and ingrafts us. Miss these — and no amount of fraternizing or finagling will amend the loss.

The church is not here to be warm but to serve God, sometimes in very cold places, for very chill causes, to very cool reception. If we serve right, of course, an appropriate warmth will be the grateful consequence. It will be the warmth of spinning cerebral gears, the sparks of minds in friction, the heat of discussion about serious, ultimate matters. It will be the warmth of muscles in motion, the sweaty warmth of a church at work, meeting resistance inside and out but pressing ahead anyhow.

Don't, don't focus on "warmth." Christian warmth is a result, not a cause. It comes or it doesn't come, *but we don't go out after it.* We go after the word and will of God and let the temperature take care of itself.

T. A. G.

Hearing the Word of God and Keeping It Will Lead to New Appreciation of Motherhood

The Blessed Mother

By Jaroslav Pelikan

As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Luke 11:27-28.

HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!" Strange words these to come from a Protestant pulpit, in spite of their sound biblical origin. Yet Mother's Day is the one day in the year when the accents of the Ave Maria lose some of their strangeness. Indeed, some cynics have suggested that Protestant churches celebrate Mother's Day because they have lost the feasts of the Blessed Virgin! Or is it that the feasts of the Blessed Virgin became necessary when pagan converts to Christianity had lost an earlier version of Mother's Day?

Whatever the history may be, Protestant preachers are embarrassed by Mother's Day. They know that there is something fundamentally wrong about glorifying motherhood for its own sake, and something fundamentally right about devoting one Sunday of the Christian year to the meaning and promise of the Christian family. It is this wrongness and this rightness that will concern us in our examination of this brief episode from St. Luke. And the text puts its description of this wrongness and rightness into the setting where it belongs, into a consideration of the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and of her blessedness. There is no room in the church year for a special celebration of my birthday, nor of yours, nor of all the birthdays in the parish; but the day set aside for the celebration of Christ's birthday is an appropriate time to consider the gift of life in relation to the gift of Him who was the Life. So also we can understand wh makes our mothers blessed if we consider them i relation to Mary, "the blessed mother."

I

Mary, the mother of our Lord, is indeed "th blessed mother," but not merely because she w the mother of our Lord. Maternity, even what rather crudely termed "the divine maternity," w not enough to qualify her as blessed. For throug out the Gospels Jesus went out of his way t repudiate any claim to importance or significanc that was based upon association with him. H forbade his disciples to spurn the company of thos who had not gone about with their band, saying "Do not forbid him; for he that is not against yo is for you." He bade them not to rejoice in th special powers that were theirs because of thei association with him, but only in the fact that thei names were written in heaven. Thus in the tw chapters preceding this text Jesus expressly rule out any eminence or blessedness whose foundatio was a mere connection with him.

Even the most intimate of connections, the bon that unites members of a family, could not serve a the foundation for blessedness. Still earlier in St Luke we witness a scene in which someone in formed Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers ar standing outside," but he responded, almos brusquely, "My mother and my brothers are thos who hear the word of God and do it." He who hac come to set brother against brother and fathe against son could not identify blessedness as mem bership in the same family to which he belonged He whose vision extended beyond his own nation t all the children of God could not make either na tion or family the condition of a blessed life in God And so not even his mother had the right to b called "the blessed mother" merely because he hac received his human life through her. For though his life had come *through* her, it had come *from* God. Only God was blessed in the full and final sense, and only God was entitled to ultimate loyalty. God the Father was the author of Jesus life, Mary was not.

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As Jesus' life came through his mother but from God, so our lives are the special creation of God. A day set aside for the Christian family and for a tribute to our mothers must still begin the Creed with: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible." And "all things" must include both our mothers and ourselves. Apart from the will of the Creator neither motherhood nor childhood is blessed. If this day is to be spent in praises to Mother, it would be better to spend it somewhere else than in church. Hear the harsh saying of this text. Neither the womb that enclosed life nor the breasts that nourished life can be termed blessed — not even when he whose life was enclosed and nourished is our Lord himself. There is no more justification for that sort of Mother's Day than there is for the feasts of the Blessed Virgin. Both celebrations forget the word upon which this whole saying of Jesus hinges: "Blessed *rather* are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" And that includes mothers, his mother and ours!

II

But the point is that it does include both his mother and our mothers. The Gospel of St. Luke, which is the only one to recount this little story, is also the only Gospel in which we are told that Mary "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." Some students of the New Testament have even concluded from this that portions of St. Luke, especially its first two chapters, represent her memoirs. Even if they do not, the portrait of Mary in this Gospel is of one who heard the word of God and kept it. To the annunciation of the angel that the Child was to be born of her she replied, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." She heard the word, she kept it, and she became its instrument. And at the other end of the story, in the closing chapter of St. Luke, she was still hearing the word of God and keeping it; for when the women went to the tomb to anoint the lifeless body, she didn't go. She didn't have to.

That made her "the blessed mother": that she heard the word of God and kept it. Perhaps the greatest calamity in the development of the cult of Mary is that thereby Christians have been deprived of one of their greatest and most human saints! Sometimes she seems to have misunderstood Jesus and his mission, and surely she did not comprehend the meaning of his words and deeds. Yet even when she did not comprehend, even when, in the *Pieta,* she was numb with grief and fear and incomprehension, even then she heard the word from the cross and kept it. The figure of the blessed mother in her grief is proof that hearing the word of God and keeping it does not mean becoming a plaster saint without fear or feeling. It means living by the occasional glimpses of God's purpose that come to us as the word of God. We hear the word of God and keep it when, in Jesus Christ, we hear God's word of forgiveness and dare to live as though it were true. Like the blessed mother, we stand before his cross with all our troubles; like her, we hear the word of God in the cross and the Crucified. And if, like her, we keep that word in faith and fear, then we too shall be blessed.

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it": this saying applies no less insistently to our mothers than it does to the mother of Jesus. Motherhood is not sacramental, nor will sentimentality make it so. But motherhood can be apostolic if a mother hears the word of God and keeps it and hands it on to her children. As we pay tribute to the mothers, living and dead, to whom we owe so much, we give thanks for the word of God which we heard through them. In the lives of most of us our mothers were the first evangelists and apostles, our earliest and often our most effective witnesses to the acts of God. Whenever I sing the songs my mother taught me, the great hymns and chorales of the faith, I join in a response to the word of God which she heard and kept and passed on to me. For reasons that psychology has only begun to understand, if not always to appreciate, the images which our parents imprint upon us stay with us always. And if one of these images is the picture of a forgiving Father holier but also kinder than any father or mother, then our parents have truly heard the word of God and kept it. Then they are truly blessed.

III

And when our parents are truly blessed because they have heard the word of God and kept it, then they are truly blessed as our parents. No contemplation of motherhood will lead us to the word of God or to faith in God, but hearing the word of God and keeping it in faith will lead us to a new contemplation and appreciation of motherhood. Thus we do not go through Mary to Christ, but through Christ to an appreciation of Mary as the blessed mother.

The blessed mother is "blessed" not because she was a mother, but because she heard the word of God and kept it. Yet the blessing of the word of God and of faith rests also upon her motherhood. She is the only woman mentioned in the Creed because she was indeed "the blessed mother," chosen by God in his sovereign freedom as the mother of the Chosen One. When we worship God and thank him for the gift of the Chosen One, we dare not forget the chosen handmaid of the Lord. It is blasphemous to thank God for his protection without realizing that he protects us through the cop on the beat. We must teach our children to

(Continued on page 22)

By John C. Harper

THE PEWS

THE subject of this paper is "What people today expect of a sermon." It is by no means an exhaustive study of the demands made on the modern preacher nor does it attempt to deal in any depth with the theology out of which the sermon must come. Rather this paper is by a preacher for preachers; it is an honest attempt to answer the question "What do people want to hear?" in the light of our understanding of what we believe they need to hear.

All of us have listened to hundreds of sermons, and most of them, one suspects, have been forgotten. Many of them should never have been preached at all. Josiah Royce, Harvard's great philosopher at the turn of the century, said that it was "pulpit impertinences" that kept him away from the University chapel, and more than one critic of Christianity has pointed to the sermon as the epitome of all that is off-beat in the relevant communication of the Christian faith. The comments of one critic about the preaching of a certain Methodist bishop of long ago are painfully descriptive of much contemporary preaching: "To hear him was like quietly getting drunk. He led his hearers by easy stages into an unreal world of effortless peace, dragging them gradually into unconsciousness by the melody that was himself. They went home to eat their Sunday dinners in a dazed silence, and remained befuddled until Monday morning, when they woke up and went about their business."

This is not to suggest that the preacher's obligation is to ignore eternal truth in favor of entertainment. The "entertaining" preacher will usually be found out far more quickly than the dull one who at least may have lived within the faith he professes. The story is told of the preacher who attempted to do that most difficult of all homiletic tasks, talk intelligently to children, and he put himself at a potential disadvantage by asking one Sunday in church: "What is it that lives up a tree, has a long bushy tail and beady eyes?" Quick as a flash a high voice called out, "God." When the youthful offender had been removed from the service by his father, the father turned to the son and asked, "Tommy, why did you say, 'God'?" To which Tommy, with the weight of Christian history on his side, replied: "Oh heck, I knew it was a squirrel, but that man should have been talking about God."

In an attempt to learn what some of Tommy's elders expect from the sermon, I suggested to ten people that they write their answers to three questions, because it occurred to me that we who preach Sunday after Sunday may sometimes tend to forget to whom we are preaching and why. The answers to these three questions are intended for this preacher even more than most others, for I am all too aware of the often impassable gulf that separates the youthful preacher from the seasoned Christian. To put it another way, I am aware, and you should be too, of the gulf that separates what we feel needs to be said and the layman's readiness or lack of readiness to hear and to accept as his own what we say. Too often the words "sermon" and "dull" are synonymous. Milton's phrase "dim religious light" applies to the sermon which may well be "dim" to those who are forced to listen. Perhaps Protestant preachers might turn to Thomas Aquinas for help in preaching if not in theology and recall his definition of God as "intelligible light." For the sermon to be heard and accepted it must shine with that "intelligible light," some part of which may make clearer and safer the way for one sitting in the pew.

"What Do You Expect?"

To begin with I asked ten of my parishioners, "What do you expect to hear in a sermon?" A young lawyer who has recently found the Episcopal Church wrote: "I want a sermon to make the reality of God so clear that I want to do something about it — so clear that I am inspired to give devotion and allegiance to His cause." He went on to speak

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TALK BACK

of the conflict in the hearer's mind between his emotion and his intellect. "It is probably not by logical demonstration that God must exist but rather by the strengthening or restoration of the heartfelt faith we had as children. The faith too often becomes obscured by the fog of rational doubts — a fog that is perhaps more easily dispersed by the sunlight of love than by the cold light of intellect. Yet the fresh faith of childhood must change as the inquiring mind develops. The mind will destroy faith if the mind is not able to support, or at least justify, faith. So the sermon must persuade the mind as well as the heart. The sermon cannot duck the great problems that have always confronted and often confounded faith." Another man who happens to be a writer said, "I want to hear words that form ideas which extend my own earnest but haphazard meditations. A sermon, like a poem or a good play, should create dramatic tension. It should contain the elements of challenge and reassurance. Since these are antithetical, tension will be strong if they are strong and in balance; and this tension stimulates, carries along, and extends both thought and emotion. A successful sermon for me is one which enriches by trenchant example and the creative thought of a 'professional meditator' some theme I have pondered myself, some time or other and more or less."

This man expresses what several of the others said, that a sermon should speak to their special needs. "I want the sermon to draw my attention" writes one man, while a young mother says, "I want to be told how to live my life as Christ would have me live it. I want to be told that it is important to be a Christian and more than that, a good Christian." "A sermon," she writes, "should give me direction, courage to face up, comfort, and fortitude — all this in a clear-cut, clearly defined way which would not try to cover more than one point, would not be cluttered up with too many ramifications, but be so simple and plain that I would not have any trouble remembering it in the week ahead and could put it to good use." A father writes, "Despite our self-assured, confident, even complacent appearance of well-being in the pews, we are underneath it all, full of anxieties. This to me is one of the reasons why we are in the pews. We are in church because we are faced with problems and tragedy which can seem unanswerable, irrational, even unbearable." And it is to these problems, this anxiety, he says, to which the sermon for many people must speak.

One deeply concerned woman writes: "A quality which I want in a sermon is a feeling of the spiritual as opposed to the worldly. I do not like a sermon to start with the equivalent of 'The last time I was in Detroit talking with Walter Reuther.' My ideas may be old-fashioned but I like a sermon to start with a biblical text which is developed by the minister and then if everyday examples are necessary to prove a point, let him mention them. However, I like to be left on a high plane at the end of a sermon, and to feel actually inspired to go out and 'do likewise.'" This same woman also says, "Another quality which pleases me in a sermon is dignity. I do not like to be talked down to, but rather to have the minister flatter his congregation by pretending they know more than they do. Chattiness and folksiness are anathema to me. It is nice, at least once during the week, to feel that I have a brain to be stimulated — not just two hands and feet which run errands, wash dishes, and make beds for a household."

Two people specifically commented on the use of the Bible in the sermon. One wrote: "I like sermons on the Bible with the use of a text, either in the beginning or in connection with the sermon. This kind of sermon using a biblical text teaches the timeless truths and gives both inspiration and healing." Another person, a young mother who is keenly alert to the problems of modern communication wrote: "I expect a sermon to be a kind of elucidation of a biblical text. Protestantism asks the individual to participate in understanding the Bible, and the sermon is a means by which a priest helps his congregation to understand." Finally, one man said, "I would like to hear about the love of God and I would like to know more

about the things I should be doing to bring about a more God-centered life in the home, in the community, in the nation, in the world."

"What do I want from a sermon?" The last answer comes from a woman who found the church in early adult life after college. This woman speaks perhaps for many modern adults when she says that she wants a sermon to be "a spiritual lift which leaves me with something to think about . . . To enlarge — to be taken out of myself and my inner circle of problems and details (not because they are so worrying but because they are so relatively petty that I need 'stretching' to put them in their proper place); to have my experience broadened by the sharing of someone else's experience; to have my understanding and knowledge of our religious faith better informed and more enlightened; to have a Christian focus put on family, community, national, and international relationships; to have faith in the reality of the spiritual life reassured and deepened to withstand the conflict of daily living; to be pricked from smugness and lifted out of discouragement; to be gently urged on to a closer relationship with God and man while not being asked to be perfect; to have my faith in others and myself refreshed or restored."

"What Do Others Think?"

The second question that was asked these same people was, "What do you think others want to hear in a sermon?" This question was not answered so readily as the first and some felt they could not attempt to judge for other people. One woman, however, wrote: "I have a friend who only feels a sermon is worthwhile if it makes her feel good. Another says, 'I want a brief, simple sermon on Christ's teachings translated into daily living.' One wanted a sermon 'which did not sound like a polished essay, but rather the priest should pound the pulpit and grope for a word and sound convincing, rather than that this was all old stuff to him, simply to be read off like an announcement.' "

One young man said: "Some people want to be shocked. Some want to be lulled. Most, like myself, want both; they want to hear words that form ideas that apply some scriptural theme to their own lives, make that theme meaningful, even exciting. Most people are not willing to have someone else do their thinking for them. But perhaps they need some initial impetus, some point of departure." Finally a church school teacher replied: "There are some people who want a sermon to be very practical and current, and others want a sermon to lay down truth as eternal and the same for everyone so that they can be sure of how to be right. The 'practical and current' churchgoer wants to know the minister's opinion of whether or not we should defend Quemoy or what we should do about segregation. Others would prefer to have a minister help take the emotion out of those issues by making us aware of how the principles involved in those faraway places are present in events closer to home which many of us don't recognize and which all of us as Christians should know about, think about, and act upon."

"What Is the Purpose?"

The final question asked was, "What is the purpose of the sermon?" Several referred to their first answer or suggested that the two questions "What do I expect to hear" and "What is the purpose of the sermon" demanded the same answer. One woman, who has probably listened to a great many sermons and whose gracious life reflects her interest said: "I feel that a rector who knows and lives with his parish and has their love and affection will surely understand their varied needs and give them the knowledge and strength to increase their faith in this troubled world." This comment is close to another: "The purpose of the sermon in the simplest words is to feed the spirit through the mind. I mean increase the spiritual awareness, the spiritual understanding, the spiritual closeness of each man to God and to his fellow man. The clue to this is the sincerity and conviction of the minister, not the eloquence, style, or dramatics, even though these may be additions if all else is equal." A mother who has asked questions of herself and her own faith replied to this question: "A sermon is an explanation of how God works in our lives and should act as a mental stimulus to get us out of our everyday grooves and encourage us to think on higher and more important things than those which take our attention the other six days of the week." Perhaps a specific, though less spiritual purpose of the sermon is found in the reply of one young man who said that a sermon should "take that which is so simple as to be unclear, to filter it through one mind and render it ponderable in present-day terms." Such a sermon, he declares, exists in order to illuminate truth. "What would be lacking if there wasn't a sermon?" one person asks. She answers her question: "Parts of the Bible and Jesus' teaching are read at every service, but without the sermon these cannot be made a part of our daily lives." "A sermon," a man declares, "offers more than a good organ recital; it is more than a word-picture, but rather it explains how the individual can be of use to God. The sermon involves man's will as well as his mind and his emotions."

The following comment is worth noticing: "I want leadership from a sermon, leadership in meeting my anxieties. And in looking to him who preaches I yearn to participate in his thoughts as he seeks to lead. I definitely do not want an exhortation that is directed at me but excludes me. I most surely do not want pat dogmatic solutions thrust at me on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. I want to feel not that I am being talked to, but with. I

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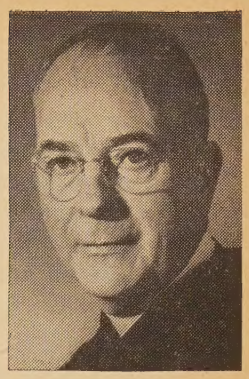
That "Strange Man on the Cross" Wins Us to His Will



God Loved the World

By Douglas Horton

God so loved the world. . . . John 3:16.

THE TEXT does not read, nor is it true, that God so loved me alone, or my family alone, or the American nation as over against Russia, that he gave his Son. It reads in words of one syllable with clear meaning that God loved the *world.*

Note that in contrast to early religious ideas this was a revolutionary one, which was brought to men as the culmination of a long chain of progressive revelation. The early gods were chiefly gods of the tribe. There are sure indications that among many peoples God was even something less than that: he was the god of the country where the tribe lived. You will recall how surprise supplanted fear in the mind of Jacob when as a young man he fled across the border of Israel and discovered that his God was to be found even in a strange country. He had earned the enmity of Esau for having tricked him out of the birthright, dared not stay at home any longer, started out in the direction of far-off Haran, and was astonished, in a dream which came to him the first night in the foreign wilderness, to hear Jehovah (which he knew as the name of his tribe's particular God) saying to him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." He could only exclaim, when he woke up, "Why, Jehovah is here too, and I never knew it." That was a step in advance — to learn that God is not confined to a locality.

It was the great prophets of the Old Testament who first cried out against the conception that there are as many gods as there are tribes or nations, some of whom are stronger than others, and of whom the strongest will be determined only as they fight it out against one another on the plains of history. When the city of Samaria was overthrown by King Sargon II of Assyria in 721 B.C., the visible event meant only one thing to most people who heard of it: the god of Assyria, who had his great temple in the capital city of Nineveh, was stronger than Jehovah, the god of Israel; and when the temple in Samaria was plundered of its altar ornaments, it was fitting and proper that they should be set up in the altar room of Ashur, the god of Nineveh, since he had won them in fair combat. The prophets set themselves to abolish this narrow and inadequate view. By the time that Amos came on the scene the people of Israel had accepted the fact that the God which they knew as Jehovah was the God of all the nations, but the old tribal idea remained in their thought that God would treat them better than he did others; and when you read the first chapters of Amos, you will see how he led, or tried to lead, the people into a broader conception. Addressing the crowds at the national fair at Bethel, the very place where, centuries before, Jacob had had his dream, he told them how God would punish the foreign state of Damascus (loud shouts of delight from the crowd). Then he went on to another nation they didn't like — Philistia. For their sins God would punish them (prolonged applause). And so to the whole list of foreign nations round about them — Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, the enthusiasm of the people mounting. But then he gets closer home: "For the transgressions of Judah, I will not turn away punishment" — and finally "for three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." That was too much: they drove him out. But the idea remained among them: God loved the whole world, and made no nation his special favorite.

Dated Perspective

Though our calendar tells us it is 1959 A.D., many of us seem still to be living in the era of those crowds which Amos addressed in the eighth century B.C. In spite of all our vaunts that we are Christian, we tend to believe that God is so clearly on the side of, let us say, the southern way of life (or the northern way, for that matter), that we do not open our eyes to the fact that he is more truly on the side of America as a whole or so much on

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the side of the American way of life that we cannot believe that he has any real interest in the rest of the world, especially that Russia. But the truth of the text still stands unchallengeable. God so loved, not this part of the race or that, but the *world,* that he gave his only begotten Son. To come to Christian maturity, it is quite necessary to see that the good of the world always comes before the good of any nation, even one's own. This means disciplining oneself against contracting one's outlook.

Let us take a little longer look at the international situation. The cold war being what it is, the one question we are likely to ask ourselves of any new proposal is, "What would it profit the free world?" We believe that that which will help the free world is all that counts, but that is surely an inverted way of getting at things. The fundamental question is: what will this or that profit the world — and therefore the free world? It is this simple difference in a way of thinking which distinguishes truly Christian statesmen — that is, statesmen with a Christian ethic — from others. They stand for their nation just as truly as any other patriot, but they see clearly that the tribal god can do nothing for us, that the God who rules the world is more interested in that world, all of it, than in the United States, and that they must strive for the welfare of all people, including the people of Russia, as well as their own. But one will say, How can we do this, the iron curtain being what it is? Precisely: *the war for Christians is war against the cold war.* We cannot afford to take the limited view that this is a war between East and West and let it go at that. In just the same way the ancients regarded the war between Nineveh and Samaria: one God and his people on one side having it out with another God and his people on the other side. This is not an East-West war; it is a civil war, from the viewpoint of the race, which splits into two the one world for the sake of which God sent his Son to reveal his love. I believe that there are many statesmen who take this view: it is ours to support them. Ours it is to wage peace, and peace begins with the proposition that the race is one as its God is one. The world comes first, because God loves it all.

What Love Is Not

The next key word in our text is the verb *loved.* God is related to the world not in a static but in a dynamic and creative way. In order to bring out what God's love really is, let us note what it is *not.*

True love is never a simple extension of oneself, so that it becomes simply a form of one's own selfishness. When a parent "loves" a child in such a way as to make him merely a servant of his (or her) own parenthood, it is of course only an amplification of one's self-centeredness, and a very vicious form of it as every psychiatrist knows. True love in a parent desires nothing so much as tha the child shall grow into the individual manhoo or womanhood which is his right. When th so-called love of man for woman or woman for ma is simply for purposes of self-gratification, it i obviously lacking in an essential. But when Joh loves Mary in such a way that he will give hi life in order that Mary may be her best self, tha is love of a genuine kind.

When God is thought of as a great being whos love is essentially selfish, then his will becomes a set of laws which his followers can disobey only a their peril. In primitive tribes the members ar usually slaves to the will of their gods in this way Fear which can lead even to death attends those who break the slightest taboo. Dr. Schweitzer tells of a young helper of his who came in hungry picked up the first bowl that came to hand and ate his yams from it. Just as he was finishing, his brother came in, saw what he was doing, and turned pale with terror. Bananas were his taboo. Hardly articulate in the midst of his fright, the brother told him that he had eaten bananas from that same bowl a little before and had not had time to wash it. The boy who had eaten the yams believed that this meant death, and because he believed it, it did. In twenty-four hours, in spite of all that Dr. Schweitzer could do, he was dead. Fear of this kind is a natural reaction to selfish love, which contracts and chokes out individuality in the "loved" one. This "love" is a rigid thing, essentially without forgiveness — and not the kind with which God's heart overflows.

Vertebrate without Backbone

There is another kind of relationship which is sometimes mistakenly given the name of love. This is love without judgment, a kind of vertebrate without backbone, a complete contradiction in terms. It seems to be the opposite of selfishness, but it has the same ill effects. Dr. Cadman of Brooklyn used to tell of an occasion when, on calling upon one of his parishioners who was a doting mother of an only child, the spoiled child himself came into the room and whispered to his mother, rudely interrupting all conversation. "Do you know what he wants?" she asked fondly. "Yes," said the doctor, "I know what he wants, but I know that you won't give it to him!"

When this kind of love is attributed to God it makes him an uncritical deity. This is the God of the pantheism that dominates the religious thought of some parts of the world. That God lets the race take its own course. He is held to be just as much interested in the bad as in the good, in the hateful lie and dark ignorance of the mind of some as well as in the purity and passion for accuracy which lightens the mind of those who love truth. He is the bowler and the bat, and for that matter the pavilion cat, as Edward Lear said. A God whose spirit is thus gelatinously spread through the whole

of existence can hardly be said to love mankind, for he is as much in that which destroys as that which enhances humanity. He spoils his people by letting them always have their own way.

God's love is not a hard demand for obedience without forgiveness in it, nor, on the other hand, is it without judgment. It judges and forgives: it forgives and judges. God's desire is to see every creature reach his perfect estate. When he loved the world he had its highest good in mind. He loves his people in such a way that they respond to him in love, so that their good deeds are not done as acts of sheer obedience to him, but have in them a quality of gratitude. This is the very essence of the gospel, that God loves the world, and that there is both forgiveness and judgment in his love.

Subject Most Important

The two key words we have looked at so far are relatively harmless. One — the world — is the object of the sentence. Objects are things that have something done to them. As objects they may be perceived but as objects do not themselves perceive. They may be governed by verb or preposition but they do not govern. That is the position in which this world finds itself in relation to God. The other word is a verb — loved — a description of a way of relating ourselves to others. This is an explanation of what a subject does to an object. It tells what a subject does or is, but it has no meaning apart from a subject.

But the third key word in my text — God — is a subject, and not an ordinary subject. The subject is the most important word in any sentence, and *God* is the most important word in the world, for God is the eternal subject: you can never get him shifted over into the place of the object, so that you can perceive him with your senses or handle him in a way you ordinarily handle the things of the world. Nor can he ever be reduced to a mere way of acting. There are those philosophers who have thought of him as a process, but the religious consciousness refuses so narrow a description. One cannot pray "Our Process, who are in heaven." God exists, God acts, God acts upon objects, though he is himself neither an act nor an object. He governs the world, though the world does not govern him. He is God.

This means that God is the key of our key words, and that to relate ourselves to the text at all, we must relate ourselves to him. And how can we do that? We take God seriously when we turn to him in prayer and other worship — and only in prayer and worship, for in worship we make ourselves the object of his will. We consciously accept him as the subject of our lives. We open ourselves into willingness to accept all that he does for us. We accept his love for the world.

In worship we "give up our power" as the Iroquois say. Here lies the difference between religion and magic: here we are not trying to make God do something for us, but giving ourselves to him, to do with as he will.

What he does to us in worship is to make us more like himself as he is revealed in Christ. Worship is attention to God, and when we attend to a thing, we can hardly avoid being assimilated to it. This is the truth that John Cotton was getting at three hundred years ago when he wrote:

> The mind of man, as Philosophers have observed, is somewhat assimilated into the nature of the Object which it studieth, and is conversant about: as Mariners who are conversant about winds, and seas, and storms are more boysterous, Shepherds and Herdsmen more bruitish, Forresters more wild, &c.

These generalizations may have been truer in the seventeenth century than they are today, but one thing is certain: no one can walk with the God who discloses himself in Jesus Christ without becoming more Christlike.

Here we return to the other parts of our text. Becoming more Christlike you begin to take the whole *world* into your consideration. You become members of the human race indeed. In your humble way, you try to see the world through the eyes of Christ. This means that you devote yourself to helping the world, that is, all its people, including the Russian people. You want to help America, but not at the expense of the rest of the world. You begin to study each part of the world from the point of view of the whole.

Furthermore, your relation to the world becomes what God's is — that of *love*. You do not use the world as the arena for the extension of your own selfhood, yet, on the other hand, you do not devote yourself to the world uncritically. You love the world.

If you do not want to be molded into a more Christlike form — the result of Christian worship — I advise you to stay away from church, for when you come to church, that strange man on the cross (as Father Terrill called him) starts looking at you and winning you to his will. So it was with George McDonald:

> I said, Let me walk in the fields.
> He said, No; walk in the town. . . .
> I said, I shall miss the light,
> And friends will miss me, they say.
> He answered, Choose tonight
> If I am to miss you, or they.
> I cast one look at the fields,
> Then set my face to the town; . . .
> Then into his hand went mine;
> And into my heart came he; . . .*

That is the way it goes. His love is hard to resist, and it calls out your love for the world.

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* George MacDonald, "What Christ Said" (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company).

The Person We Know

By Harold E. Fey

You shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8.

IN A COURT of law, in science and generally in human affairs, the truth is established through witnesses. Nobody has time to test the truth about everything by personal investigation; each of us must depend on the evidence provided by others who know.

This is true in religion, the most important of all matters. What we know we have learned from others. Then we must teach. The commission given to the whole church and to every member in it is: "You shall be witnesses unto me." The mandate is from Jesus Christ. We are commanded to attest by our own knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

To give evidence about and in behalf of the Son of God is not a light responsibility. We submit our testimony before the supreme court of man, the conscience, knowing very well that the decision he makes on the basis of our testimony may be the most important of his life. We testify before the court of heaven itself about Him who said: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of me and I know the testimony which he bears to me is true. You sent to John and he has borne witness to the truth . . . the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me." What awesome company we join when we witness to Jesus Christ!

A witness is a person who speaks what he knows. The term comes from the word *wit,* which in its original meaning signified the capacity to know, the power of the mind to apprehend. It meant sense, intellect, understanding. A witness is therefore a person who knows. He does not depend on what he has heard from others; he speaks from his own knowledge. "You shall b my witnesses" was the last command given to h disciples by Jesus. He said: *"You shall receiv power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon yo and *you shall be witnesses unto me* in Jerusale and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end o the earth." They were to begin where they wer and with their own people, but they were to g everywhere.

Jesus Christ was a person. We testify that thi person lived and that he lives, and so we introduc this person to other persons. "Jesus Christ i the gospel we preach." We are not primaril witnessing about an ideology, a belief, a religion a system of church government or order. Th Christian gospel is concerned with a person, wit his appearance in history, at a time we know an in a place we know, among people we know about His life, death and resurrection were the climax o the mighty acts of God in history.

These things happened. They were no dreamed up. They were not imagined by mer who wrote the New Testament. Instead the New Testament was written because these event occurred. They were not invented by the founder of the church; the church had to come int existence because witnesses knew what God ha done, and this knowledge between them became more important than anything else. It welded them into a new society, a community of witnesses They had to speak out. Paul said: "Woe is me if I preach not the good news" of Christ risen

The Committed Man

A witness is a committed man. He knows with his life as well as with his mind; he shares his knowledge with others who may also "know Christ and the power of his resurrection." Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "I have committed my self-respect by talking with such a person."

Arthur Miller says that when he is writing a play, he guides all the action of the plot toward the moment of commitment: "that time when a man separates himself from every other man; that time when, out of a sky full of stars, he chooses

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one star." The sky is full of stars. Billions of them! Possibilities are endless. But sooner or later every man chooses one star. This is commitment.

If the star that is chosen is Jesus Christ, the choice is of truth. He is the truth! Truth is not a proposition or a series of theories; it is personality, incarnation. It is being there when the chips are down. It is to take issues to ourselves: Truth does not say, "All men are mortal." It says: "I too must die." Christ hasn't got the answer; he *is* the answer and if we don't witness to his living presence, we miss everything.

This is why, as Milton said, "a man may be a heretic in the truth." The great poet continued: "If a man believe things only because his pastor says so, or an assembly so determines, without knowing any other reason, though his belief be true yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy." This is why some people are able to quote the Bible endlessly with no other effect than to drive people away from Christ and the church while others who read the Bible with real understanding in their hearts may quote it seldom but be the magnet to draw people to the Word of God.

Incarnate truth is a wonderful and a terrible thing. It does not shrink from darkness. It is not afraid in the dark, and it does not make false claims so that good may be advantaged. It does not recoil from the unanswered questions of life by taking refuge in the false security of infallible word or infallible pope or any other flight from reality. It goes with Jesus to the cross rather than avoid suffering by agreeing to comfortable lies. Church or pope cannot be infallible for they have always been involved with fallible men. The Bible cannot be infallible because it was written in history by men who were influenced by history and so it can only be truly understood with the help of historical research. Truth, reality, are found in Jesus Christ and not in books or institutions. The best they can do is to be schoolmasters to lead us to Christ.

There is no place to hide; no security in slavery to authority. But we can commit our ways — our insecure, uncertain, searching, badly informed, stumbling ways, unto the Lord who is the truth. If we do, he will keep that which we have committed unto him and will guide us into all truth, so we shall know fully even as we are fully known.

"Christian faith gives no security in the world," says Rudolph Bultmann, Germany's most influential theologian, "except that as faith in God's manifest grace it gives a man freedom to walk courageously through darkness and enigma and to risk and carry responsibility for action in the loneliness of his own decision."* When we do that, the Christ who is the truth will walk by our side through darkness and enigma. We are saved by faith which strips us and brings us in complete surrender to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ, who is not a proposition but a person.

In the second place, if our choice is the star of Bethlehem, the choice is of love. Jesus Christ is the Lord of love. He sheds his love abroad in the hearts of all men through the Holy Spirit, even in nations which exploit hate as an instrument of national policy. All who repent of their sins and know unmerited divine forgiveness accept his love and are reconciled to God and to their brothers. Christ's will is to reconcile all men in the family of God. The moment we refuse to expand the circle of his love over any enemy, any race or class or religion, we deny his lordship in our lives. The moment we try to keep his love as a private possession we lose it.

Breakdown of Truth and Love

The most serious threat to American Christianity and our churches comes because of a breakdown of truth and love. The unchristian preoccupation of many Christians with sin and salvation on narrowly personal and private grounds keeps them and their churches from grappling with problems of international, corporate and civic morality. Don't misunderstand; if salvation is not personal it is nothing. But most sin is corporate and is never attacked by Christians. We acknowledge it is wrong to allow gangsters to run nationwide gambling syndicates, jukebox rackets, prostitution rings. But we also commit a sin when we sit silently by and allow international politics to drift toward ultimate disaster. It is wicked for us to say nothing when projects for bearing our weaker brothers' burdens through economic aid or the missions are sabotaged by organized selfishness. It is an offense against God to refuse to lift a finger to keep the liquor industry from debauching youth, wrecking homes, corrupting government, filling our newspapers and air waves with lying advertising, filling our mental institutions and prisons with wrecked humanity — all for the sake of profits. A great struggle is on between the communist world and the democratic world. The essential difference is freedom. The victors in this struggle will not be people who are enslaved to their own lusts.

What kind of witnesses are we to Christ? In recent years too many Christians have forgotten that they are supposed to be like salt in food; like light in darkness. Too many of us have become permissive when decent moral standards were attacked as "puritanism." We have lapsed into silence while the "anything goes" boys derided the idea that sound theology requires high ethical standards. Drink, drugs, infidelity and moral laxity have all crept into the church and even into the ministry of Christ. The idea that Christians should keep clean the inside of the cup, that we should curb self-indulgence by work, by self-denial, by

* Rudolph Bultmann, "Theology for Freedom and Responsibility," *The Christian Century*, August 27, 1958.

self-criticism, by moral fidelity, is derided as old-fashioned.

This cowardly hedonism, this soft intellectualism, this dilettantism in living is not Christian. It is even far below the insight the pagan Greek civilization achieved centuries before Christ. "Freedom was born in Greece because there men limited their own freedom . . . Only the man who holds himself within self-chosen limits can be free," says Edith Hamilton who knows the Greek. Surely we can pull ourselves back from the brink of fleshly damnation, back to self-giving in love for Christ's sake, back to self-discipline in the interest of a better Christian witness, back to stern mastery of the body with the lusts thereof so that the soul may live and God may be glorified. Surely we can learn once more to "crucify the flesh" — the word is from the New Testament, as one way to witness to Christ.

In the third place, witnessing to Christ demands we acknowledge that the message and the power of evangelism are and must remain his. The new heaven and new earth are his, the means of redemption are his, the grace by which we are forgiven and saved are his.

> God who is rich in mercy out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, *made us alive* together with Christ (by grace you are saved) and raised us up with him and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not because of works lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship.

Now what does this mean? We have been carried away by the idea that evangelism depends altogether on us. We have the notion that modern techniques of promotion, advertising, TV, radio, made accessible by plenty of members and plenty of money, are going to enable us to take the Kingdom of heaven by storm. We say: Look at how many people we have in our churches! See how our budgets grow from year to year, each year breaking all previous records. Look at our soaring Sunday school enrollments, our bulging seminaries, our mighty new cathedrals rising all over the land! Yes, look, and see Christ weeping over us as he did over Jerusalem, crying: If you had only known the things that belong to your peace! Behold your house is left unto you desolate.

This makes us angry. We demand to know of Christ: Have we not ministered in your name? Have we not sent clothes to the refugees and spent billions to help ungrateful foreigners? Have we not kept our membership lists growing and poured out money (if not righteousness) as a mighty stream? Then we get the same kind of answer that was given long ago — something about what we fail to do to help the least of these, his brethren, we fail to do unto him.

Come to think of it, the prospect lists of our churches do not have on them many notorious sinners, not many alcoholics, not many of the lost, the poor, the uprooted, the mentally and physically sick. Not many leaders of gangs of boys in the slums are on our prospect lists. Not many prisoners. Mostly they are people like we are, and we are especially attentive in our cultivation of well-heeled families who can help with the budget.

Well, what's wrong with that? A bigger budget means we can do more good, doesn't it? More members mean more missionaries, better buildings, more prestige, don't they? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no. It all depends. It depends upon honesty, for one thing. If you desire to have people join your church to get their help on the budget, don't pretend you want them to join because God needs them to help build his church. If you want people for the prestige they can bring, be honest about it and tell them so. But don't pretend that this is the way to build the community of witnesses to God's forgiving power.

Faith Sweet and Strong

If you are worried about lack of evangelistic zeal, about faded commitments, about pointless and powerless prayer, stop trying to get people to serve the church and get the church to serve the people. Devote half as much energy to trying to save a gang of predelinquent boys, or to oust a gang of civic highbinders from power, as you do to cultivating comfortable and influential people when they move into your neighborhood.

God took the initiative in evangelism when he sent his only begotten Son to reveal his nature and to call us to repentance. He still has that initiative. Nobody is on your list of concern for conversion or a renewal of church relationship who was not on God's list first. Never forget that God wants a man, for himself, a woman for herself; not to save a church, not to make possible a new organ. His arm is not weakened and his voice is not softened. But God must be listened to even on the committee on ways and means.

Finally, remember that the church and the Christian witnesses by deeds even more than by words. The people who stand in need, the little people, the hurt and helpless people, the hungry people and the people of color, they understand deeds of love. They especially understand self-forgetting deeds. Who is it that has sold the churches on the idea that ballyhoo about the services we render is modest, that it is decent, that it is even consistent with Christian charity which does not let the left hand know what the right hand does? Have the Pharisees, who went to the temple to remind God and anybody else who happened to be listening about their good deeds, taken over? Let witnesses tell of God's goodness, God's kindness, God's forgiveness, God's glory. When that happens the angelic choir will save Madison Avenue the trouble of singing about our deeds.

Jesus Refuses to Be Put Off
As a Dreaming, Do-Good Carpenter

Stuck with Christ

By Henry Kuizenga

Is not this the carpenter . . . ? Mark 6:3.

THIS is the question Jesus' neighbors asked as they saw Jesus in his home-town synagogue and heard him expounding the Scriptures with that authority and conviction which always amazed those who heard him. But amazement soon turned to astonishment and astonishment to antagonism. They said to each other, "Who does he think he is? He is only the carpenter's son from down the street; you know, Joseph's boy. He used to live here. You know young Jo and Jude and Jim and Sime! Those are his brothers and he has some sisters too. Well, who does he think he is?" The Bible says, "They took offense at him."

It is no wonder, really, that they were offended and scornful. Had Jesus come back to his home town of Nazareth as Fidel Castro rode recently into Havana, having covered himself with glory, as the French would say, the townspeople of that Galilean village would no doubt have given Jesus their equivalent of a ticker-tape celebration. But now here is Jesus, as humble and as poor as ever. He commands no armies, boasts not a single Roman scalp. Yet on the Sabbath he rises in the synagogue to read and to teach the Scriptures with such power and insight that even his old neighbors suddenly begin to feel the meaning and the presence of God himself. It disturbs and moves them deeply. But then someone remembers that this is only Joseph's boy from down the street. And with the informality often characteristic of synagogue worship, the people begin to whisper and to buzz until someone asks, quite audibly, "Is not this the carpenter?" To this there is probably a loud murmur of assent. Then altogether they try to dismiss the Master as the carpenter.

Well, what do you say, is *not* this the carpenter? The best answer to that, I should think, is "Yes, — but no!" It is obvious from the fact that Jesus brought his disciples with him to Nazareth that he was not primarily concerned on this trip with making a visit on the home folks. His purpose is evangelism. He reads the Scriptures at Isaiah 61, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Then Jesus quietly closes the Bible and he tells the people that God is now fulfilling these Scriptures before their eyes. You and I would have been astonished too. And as if this were not enough to amaze those folks, Jesus then goes on to remind them of how centuries before God instructed Elijah to go beyond the bounds of Israel to carry the grace and healing of God to the pagan woman Zarephath of Sidon, and of how God bade Elisha to cure the pagan leper, Naaman of Syria, though there were plenty of lepers in Israel too. In Luke's Gospel we read that when Jesus began to speak to the people of the synagogue in this vein, "They were filled with wrath."

Is not this the carpenter? Yes, but no! For he is not content just to be the home-town boy with a fine voice and perspicacious mind who can turn a neat phrase and read the Scriptures arrestingly. He is not satisfied either that the people of God should gather in the synagogue to sleep, to enjoy each other's company, to congratulate each other on the community's virtue and decency, and to bolster each other's self-righteous smugness and cold indifference to the rest of the world. Is not this the carpenter? Yes, but *no*. For he is God's word of truth who cuts more sharply than a two-edged sword. He is present too in every church across the land and around the world to make God's business our business.

This is a truth which we conventional members of conventional churches are likely to resist, if not to resent, as much as did Jesus' old neighbors in the

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synagogue at Nazareth that morning two thousand years ago. We all believe in God all right; that is, in a very aloof and dignified sort of god who knows his place and does not interfere in matters which we feel are none of his business, a god whom you can worship at the properly appointed times and without any loss of dignity to yourself. I once read a statement by a former bishop of one of our churches in which he said that as a young man he left the church in which he was reared for the church in which he was later to become a bishop because as a young man he discovered that in the latter he could prostrate himself before the Almighty without any loss of dignity. We church people all like a god whom we can keep at a safe and respectable distance with a few prayers and a yearly pledge to the church. We all believe in God. But if God turns out to be your neighbor, that brings him too uncomfortably close. If God comes in Jesus, the lowly carpenter, then there will never be any escape from him. That is what makes the doctrine of the Incarnation so disturbing. Once admit that God is with you in the carpenter, that God can get at you in the carpenter, then there is no telling what God may expect of you. No, said the neighbors of Nazareth, "Who does he think he is? He's only the carpenter's son from down the street." And so they all returned to their comfortable evasions of God's love.

Our Inclination to Reject

That is the way Matthew must have felt when Jesus came along — Matthew, that tax collector whom everyone hated for his sharp dealing and whose life was full of the callous bitterness of an unscrupulous businessman in a business situation where everyone was "hard-boiled." That is the way Peter must have felt too when Jesus found him, a burly fisherman probably cursing over the heavy nets which had got all tangled up. That is the way everyone is likely to feel whom Jesus approaches. Is not this merely the carpenter? What business would God have way down here where I am, all selfish and human and earthy and wicked?

There are then two parts to, or reasons for, our inclination to reject the carpenter as the Son of God. Jesus, for his part, refuses to be put off as the do-good carpenter because he wishes to bring first us and then the world through us to grips with the love of God at work in us and in the world about us. For our part, we resist Christ and try to dismiss him as the dreaming carpenter in order to avoid first, love's claim upon ourselves; and second, love's urge upon us to press its claims upon the world. But this is the church's business: to admit that Jesus is the carpenter while we insist that he is also the incarnate love of God for us, and through us for the world.

On the eve of his crucifixion Jesus wrapped himself in the servant's towel and washed his disciples' feet. Peter resisted, but Jesus persisted. When he was finished he rose to say, "As I have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet." It is the church's business to learn to see Christ as the eternal head of the church who wishes by means of his church to become the lowly companion of every human heart.

This is embarrassing to Christians. It is no longer embarrassing to say that there is a god. But it is embarrassing to maintain against all scoffers that there is a God who is love, who, because he is love comes close to us in the carpenter, and who because he comes so close to us, we must bring close to the world. This is embarrassing.

It must have been embarrassing for Jesus too to get up there in the synagogue at Nazareth before his former neighbors to make such claims as he made. It would have been much easier and more pleasant for him just to have read the Scriptures prettily, to have delivered some comforting little homily laced with lines of poetry and then to have sat down. But for Jesus this would have been to betray the God who sent him.

In the fourth Gospel, chapter twelve, we read that Philip and Andrew, during the first Holy Week, tell Jesus that some Greeks who have come to the Passover festival are taking an interest in him and wish to see him. Instead of seeing in this an omen of escape from the ordeals of Good Friday, Jesus says, "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour."

Men and women in the church, is it not for this purpose that you and I have come to this hour? To represent the carpenter as the Son of God and the Savior of the world? It would be easier to represent Jesus as merely the good carpenter and to forget the rest, the scene in the synagogue, with Jesus insisting that those good people see in him the claim of God's love upon them and on his say-so do something to introduce the rule of his love into the world about them.

This would be easier. There is evidence too that we American church people are falling for this easier approach to Christianity. I noted with shuddering apprehension how Anastas I. Mikoyan, the first deputy premier of Russia, made political capital recently of the American disposition to lose sight of the Son of God in the carpenter. "Oh," said Mikoyan, with that suave and colossal cynicism at which the Communists have always been past masters, "you folks must not worry about the differences between the Russian and American philosophies of life. You believe in God. We do not. But we are both interested in attaining a higher standard of living. That is all that matters."

Imagine Russia sending one of its top officials to travel up and down and across our land to declare to our faces that our faith in God fails to distin-

guish us in any telling way from the Communists. Why do they think they can get away with this kind of effrontery? Is it because they know that basically millions of American "Christians," but for different nationalistic and political trimmings, live by the same materialistic philosophy as their own? Is it because they believe that millions of us agree with Mikoyan and are tempted to accept the attractive picture he presents of a world in which we shall all work together for high standards of living and forget this nonsense about God? Picture the great red father, seated in the Kremlin, smiling to himself and saying, "Why should I bother to destroy those people and risk counter-destruction? They are wedded to their idols. The differences between us are only superficial. If only they knew it!"

How does it happen that in Russia's eyes our much-vaunted faith in God looks meaningless and fails to distinguish us from them except on the surface? Is it because God has become for us one apart, aloof, separated from life, whose existence does not affect the day-to-day decisions we make? Is it because we do not see the connection between the carpenter and the eternal God? Is it because we turn deaf ears to Jesus' plea, ". . . believe in God; believe also in me . . . I am the way, the truth and the life"?

The Embarrassing Claim

So that, if you will, and in a sense, the church is stuck with Christ. If we would be the church, we shall have to adhere to the embarrassing claim which Jesus made in the synagogue at Nazareth long ago. I always come back to the analogy of the American businessman and his dilemma in relation to the profit motive, with the church and its dilemma in relation to Christ and his claim.

If there is one thing the American businessman favors, it is good public relations. He will spare no effort to foster them. Yet he refuses to eliminate the one greatest deterrent to the establishment of good public relations. He insists upon making a profit. He charges money for his goods. Worse still, if you do not pay cash, he will send you a bill. And if you do not pay your bill, he will even set the law on you. Can you think of a better way to alienate people and discourage them from returning to your place of business than to expect them to pay money for what you have to sell? Yet your businessman persists in his determination to make a profit. To overcome this almost insuperable barrier to good public relations, he will spend millions of dollars every year. Why does he do it? He does it because he is stuck with the profit motive.

Just so the church is stuck with Christ. The church would have no enemies; Christ would be in everybody's catalog of heroes; even the Communists would gladly dub him "comrade"; if only the church would stop talking about the Son of God and settle for the kindly carpenter, then all opposition to the church would fall away. We should not need to bother with annoying distinctions between Christianity and communism because there would be no essential difference.

Soon there would be no church. Church buildings in America would become museums as in Russia most of them already are. And all our fine talk about freedom and the dignity of the individual would dissolve like the thin mist on a March morning before a red and storm-auguring sun in the east.

All that stands between us and the brave new world of Khrushchev and Mikoyan is the fact that the church is stuck with Christ.

For Food and Delight

A sermon should be like a tree.
It should be a living organism:
With one sturdy thought like a single stem
With natural limbs reaching up into the light.

It should have deep roots:
As much unseen as above the surface
Roots spreading as widely as its branches spread
Roots deep underground
In the soil of life's struggle
In the subsoil of the eternal Word.

It should show nothing but its own unfolding parts:
Branches that thrust out by the force of its inner life
Sentences like leaves native to this very spray
True to the species
Not taken from alien growths
Illustrations like blossoms opening from inside these very twigs
Not brightly colored kites
Pulled from the wind or somebody else's thought
Entangled in these branches.

It should bear flowers and fruit at the same time like the orange:
Having something for food
For immediate nourishment
Having something for delight
For present beauty and fragrance
For the joy of hope
For the harvest of a distant day.

To be all this it must grow in a warm climate:
In loam enriched by death
In love like the all-seeing and all-cherishing sun
In trust like the sleep-sheltering night
In pity like the rain.*

* From *Design for Preaching* by H. Grady Davis (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958). Used by permission.

Persisting As a Creative Disturbance Is the Glory of the Church

Keeping the World's Conscience Uneasy

By J. A. Davidson

These men . . . are disturbing our city.
Acts 16:20.

THAT is part of the charge laid against Paul and Silas in the magistrates' court of the city of Philippi. Paul and his missionary companions had crossed over from Asia Minor into Greece, and found their way to the boom-city of Philippi. While there they were bothered by a hysterical slave girl who followed them about shrieking, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." Paul and his friends stopped and talked with the girl, and as a result of her conversation with Paul the girl was cured of her hysteria. (In this age of psychology and psychiatry the account of the cure should raise no skeptical eyebrows.)

The girl was the property of a group of men. In her hysterical state she told fortunes and was for her owners a source of considerable revenue. Paul ruined this cruel little racket by curing the girl of her disorder. The men in their anger laid charges against Paul and Silas before the city magistrates. They told the court that the accused were Jews, strangers in Philippi, who were upsetting the city by teaching doctrines and advocating customs which did not accord with the Roman way of life. The accusers stirred up the crowd to give weight to their case and help convince the magistrates that the two strangers should be dealt with as dangerous and subversive aliens. The healing of the slave girl was not in itself an indictable offense, but the prosecution tried to make it appear part of an extensive program of subversion. Thus the healing of the girl was seized on as an occasion for trying to stop all the activities of the Christian missionaries.

The magistrates may have had doubts as to the propriety of the charges and the legality of the trial; nevertheless they found Paul and Silas guilty and ordered that they be beaten and thrown into jail. These outsiders disturbed the city, and they couldn't be allowed to get away with that. By their teaching and by their compassion they upset the fixed order of things — and were punished by the authorities as public nuisances.

"These men . . . are disturbing our city." This incident illustrates the impact made by the early Christians on their world. It points to one of the fundamental tasks of the church in our world. James Reid in a study of this incident wrote that it is the business of Christians to "keep the conscience of the world uneasy."

Paul and Silas were troublemakers. They did not go about trying to stir up trouble merely for the sake of trouble itself, but their message had explosive qualities. They were men of goodwill, whose missionary aim was to reconcile men to one another through reconciling them to God. But the gospel they proclaimed was a challenge to the popular values and moral standards of Graeco-Roman civilization. The offense of the early Christians was that they refused to allow that civilization the comfort and the luxury of an easy conscience. They refused to compromise the moral insights of the gospel. They proclaimed and practiced a love and compassion that were new to the world. They gave their civilization an uneasy conscience. Therein is the root of the hostility and persecution which the early church suffered.

Continuing Impact

And here is the pattern for the church's continuing impact on society. "These men . . . are disturbing our city." Today people are not readily convinced that this is one of the fundamental tasks of the church. Keep the world's conscience uneasy? Disturb the city? Can that really be a Christian duty, a Christian moral obligation?

Through the years much thought has been given to the problem of the church's relationship to society; many words have been spoken and written, and not a little blood has been shed. There is still a great deal of confusion and

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disagreement, but three approaches or attitudes seem to dominate the field today.

Firstly, there is the attitude of *withdrawal.* This is the attitude of those who advocate that the church completely separate herself from the world. They would have the church barricade herself in some impregnable citadel of piety and let the world go its sinful way to hell without any interference. They hold that we must not risk compromising ourselves by taking any definite stands on political and economic issues. This is the way of the soft Christian, the timid weak-kneed pietist who is so afraid of the world that he tries to withdraw completely from it.

Curiously, this way of withdrawal is also sometimes advocated by the hard man of the world, the man who snorts indignantly that the church should stick to basic religion, to the simple gospel, and not mess about in politics and economics. (One suspects that his indignation is often merely a gospel-induced uneasiness of conscience.) This way of withdrawal is the one the world would compel the church to walk when the church threatens to upset a few applecarts. A striking example of this was the warning given by the late Dr. Goebbels in a broadcast to the German churches at Christmas 1938: "A church dabbling in politics should take note that their only task is to prepare for the hereafter."

The second approach is that of *identification.* This is the way of those who would identify the gospel of Jesus Christ with a specific social and political philosophy, who claim that this economic system or that political ideology is either simply a practical expression of the gospel or, at least, the only one consistent with the gospel. This is the way of the man who would try to organize and mobilize the church to defend free enterprise of some sort, or some variety of socialism, or some peculiar monetary policy. Sometimes a shameless effort is made to use the Christian faith as a vote-catching endorsement for a particular political party.

This approach, in a rather mild form, is shown in the tendency today to commend faith and support the church primarily because religion is deemed a valuable force for the maintenance of social and political stability, for the protection of "our way of life." Unquestionably, the Christian religion can also be a stabilizing force in society. But the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be fitted into a strait jacket provided by any social and political ideology, even the democratic one.

Involvement in Society

The third way is the way of disturbing the city, the way of *giving the world an uneasy conscience.* And, I put it to you, here is the church's fundamental task in its relations with the society in which it lives. I am not suggesting that the church stir up trouble merely to let the world know that it is alive and kicking — although a bit of such stirring-up might be salutary from time to time. The church is not called upon to become a monstrous busybody of an institution that must go butting-in on everything. Nor should it try to stand on some lofty pedestal of its own devising and look haughtily down on the sinful, pointing a self-righteous finger at the sore spots. Its people are very much part of society and very much involved in society's sins and sores; the church does not speak to society from some detached outside point but from within society. Involvement in society not only gives it the right to speak out on society's problems, it also imposes on it the duty of speaking out.

But the church must be wary of presumption as it disturbs the city, as it tries to sensitize society's conscience. The gospel does not provide a detailed economic and political blueprint. We must always remember that the intensely practical problems of economics and politics require intensely practical decisions, technical decisions for which faith cannot provide specific guidance except at the level of basic motivation. Let us always recognize that honest and sincere and informed Christians do differ among themselves on economic and political matters. Let us not fall into the sinful presumption which assumes that only *our* political friends give worthy expression to the faith in their political thinking.

Wary of Presumption

There are economic and political ideologies that contradict Christian principles. The communism of today is contradicted by fundamentals of our faith; the same can be said of fascism in its various forms. But there is wide scope for differences of opinion among Christians on economic and political matters. If you think that your Christian brother holds wrong political convictions, then you should oppose those convictions, but do not try to read him out of the church, do not charge him with insincerity and feeble faith because you think him in error in his political thinking and affiliations. Some economic and political systems do contradict Christian principles, but it is impossible to deduce from the gospel a system and a program that alone are valid for Christians.

But all this does not mean that we must be meekly quiet in the face of social evils and injustice. The church must not be afraid to trouble the city, to sound a note of judgment on society, to jar and jostle society's comfortable conscience. Think of some of the things that have happened when the church has made the world's conscience uneasy. Think of the abolition in the Roman Empire of the horrible custom of killing unwanted babies. Think of the development in European civilization of institutions for the care of the sick, the poor, the

destitute aged, the orphaned. Think of Wilberforce and the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire, and then of slavery itself. Think of Shaftsbury and his rescue of children and women from the virtual slavery of factory service in early industrial Britain. Think of the abolition of slavery in the United States of America. Think of all the great modern humanitarian movements which owe most of their direction and dynamic to the moral impulse of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church sometimes has to tread on a few toes, upset a few applecarts, start a few whirlwinds. It must risk censure, criticism, unpopularity. And do not think that this is a matter only for church leaders and church councils, and that the ordinary Christian really hasn't very much to do with such things. Dr. Max Warren, one of the great missionary leaders of our day, has written of "the slow steady beat of the Christian witness on the conscience of the community." Most of the work of sensitizing society's conscience will be done by ordinary Christian men and women going about their appointed tasks and witnessing to the faith that is in them. Every Christian is under a solemn obligation so to live and so witness to his faith in Christ that the world's conscience will be made uneasy — and, of course, this requires that his own conscience will be kept sensitive by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"These men . . . are distrubing our city." In that is one of the great glories of the church of Christ.

Pews Talk Back

(Continued from page 8)

want to feel that these are his anxieties too, for the preacher may not be as near the answer as some obscure but holy soul in the pew." Finally one person wrote: "A sermon that can help us achieve faith of the heart and of the mind will fulfill what must be the main purpose of the sermon; namely, to give us a conviction that the purpose of life itself is to grow in God's ways and to act accordingly."

It is not the intention of this paper to evaluate these statements but rather to give them as a sober reminder that these are what some of the people in the pews expect from us. They often expect more than we or anyone else are able to give, but they expect to see God better through us. They ask neither eloquence or cleverness of the preacher, but rather an honest effort to present timeless truths of God in such a way that these truths may become their own. They ask us to reveal, to illuminate. It is in part through the preacher's weak ability, and partly through his hearer's willingness to listen that the Truth of truths speaks to men and wom today.

The Second Epistle to Timothy, reflecting it does the concerns of first century Christians, a grave reminder to preachers in the twentie century. The final chapter of the Epistle begi "I charge you in the presence of God and of Chr Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, a by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the wo be urgent in season and out of season, convin rebuke, exhort, be unfailing in patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people w not endure sound teaching, but having itching ea they will accumulate for themselves teachers to su their own likings, and will turn away from listeni to the truth and wander into myths. As for yo always be steady, endure suffering, do the work an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

The work of an evangelist and the fulfillme of our ministry meet in the preaching of the Wor If the Word is to be heard as convincing gosp it will be spoken through us to a world whi waits to hear.

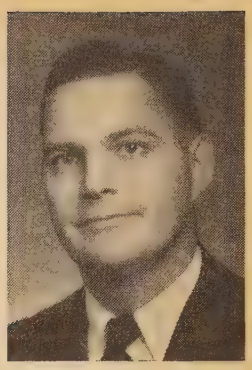
Pentecost Prayer

WE THANK thee, God our Father, for th birthday of the Christian church; for th little company of men who met together to car on the ideals of Jesus and who became conscio as they prayed in ancient Jerusalem, of thy nea ness and thy power. We thank thee that the chur which they established has survived the centuri and that it has won many conquests over th enemies of mankind.

We remember with gratitude the Christian who lifted a torch of hope in ancient times, ambassadors of good will; builders of havens mercy; friends of the outcast, the slave, the orpha the poor, and the sick; martyrs in the arenas an upon flaming crosses; refugees who hid in cat combs because of their faith in the fatherhood God and the brotherhood of man. Make us worth to follow in their footsteps.

Rekindle in our minds the faith of those wh at Pentecost felt thy spirit close about them, tha we may be stirred from our indolence to strive wit enthusiasm for progress. May the fire of thy spir purify us from evil desire, from doubt and fea Heal the divisions of thy church and bind ou discordant voices into an anthem of praise. Forgiv us for the petty differences that we have create between ourselves and other Christians. Unite u in a universal fellowship of good will, in service t one another and to thee. Amen. — *Robert M Bartlett, First Congregational Church, Shrewsbur Massachusetts.*

God's Grandeur and Caring Give Needed Perspective



Seeing Our Size

By L. C. Rudolph

ONE of our human problems is keeping ourselves in focus. Sometimes we see ourselves too large, sometimes too small. Seeing ourselves too large is no new illusion. Our race is not famous for its humility. In the garden the serpent said to Eve, "You will not die. When you eat of the fruit your eyes will be open and you will be as God." Both our first parents liked that idea. Jacob's mother thought he was the finest lad in all the land, and Jacob agreed with his mother. Joseph embarrassed his whole family with his high opinion of himself. To use these persons for good, God had to overcome some impressive faults of vision.

Sometimes it is our position which helps us to see ourselves kingsize. Louis XIV of France was king for a while and got so confused he declared, "I am the state." Frank Hague, political boss and governor of New Jersey, manipulated the statutes until he arrived at the classic conclusion, "I am the law." Then there was the boy who had a job of carting the mail bags from the railroad station to the post office, a federal position. One day he was being crowded by a bully. Said he, "Be mighty careful. When you jostle me, you jostle the United States Government."

It can be our position which gets us out of focus. And yet we cannot eliminate responsible positions. In our complicated society such things as the routine flow of traffic, the supply network of a supermarket, the efficiency of office and factory are nothing short of miraculous. There must be a meticulous division of labor and responsibility. Each of us takes some particular role or part in getting the world's work done. This is one of the basic ways in which we love our neighbor — we do honest work for him. This is one of the basic ways in which we serve God — we build a portion of his Kingdom where we work.

Along with these positions go certain privileges which are specifically to help us do a good job. There are titles and levels of authority and prerogatives precisely to help in the doing of our work. A man is not simply Smith. He is production chief for the third floor at the thread factory, or doctor, or colonel, or corporal — always something.

Most of us have a prestige value. We are expert in our craft or trade. We represent a good company or a large one or both. We are with the F.B.I. or the paratroops. We are attorney, teacher, or physician. We come from an honorable family in the community.

Status Related to Service

This is as it should and must be. But here is the danger. We get to thinking this rank or title is somehow indelibly impressed on our personal being. The least grandeur may be the more vigorously worn, as a thousand tales try to prove at the expense of second lieutenants, part time patrolmen, and secretaries of the front office. Few of us manage to be the Louis XIV or Frank Hague of our little realm. Perhaps all of us should be biannually turned out in a strange city flat broke just for the reminder that our status is related to our service.

This seeing ourselves too large may be related to money. Most of us feel we serve as channels through which our income proceeds to our creditors. But it may be that by diligence, insight, or providence we get a few dollars ahead. This can lead to a giddy feeling, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many days." Yet any thinking person will quickly see that money and savings make no man independent as if he needed nobody. Money and savings are exactly the marks of one's trust and dependence on others. When the market and labor force of *today* will pay back in goods and sweat and skill our contribution of *yesterday,* that is ground for humble thanks. What greater dependence can there be?

For whatever cause, we often see ourselves too large. The seriousness of this is well expressed in the observation that "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." What is the

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cure? To live in the presence of Almighty God that we see ourselves beside him in his greatness, his goodness, and his purity.

> When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? (Psalm 8:3, 4.)

> It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in . . . . (Isaiah 40:22.)

> Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these [suns, moons, stars, satellites, galaxies]? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. (Isaiah 40:26.)

When we see ourselves too large we can at least step out in the yard and look up. When we get pleased with our little goodness we can compare it with his purity. We live out our days in the presence of One so overwhelmingly great and good that the very thought of him puts us back in focus.

Our Lord said it in the simple story of the Publican and the sinner, and in his comment to his disciples: "If any one would be first he must be last of all and servant of all." Likewise, St. Paul speaks plainly in Romans ". . . I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment. . . ."

The Other Half

That's half the story — sometimes we see ourselves too large. The other half is this — sometimes we see ourselves too small.

A patrolman walking his beat found a man up on the bridge about to leap off and end it all. Said the policeman: "The least you can do is to tell me your troubles." So the man came down. For a long time they sat and talked and talked and talked. Then they arose, walked out on the bridge, and jumped off together. We see ourselves too small in times of despair. We cannot bear it. Someone we love doesn't care for us. The opportunity on which we counted, the one for which we studied and worked for years, is gone. In one seemingly senseless storm a town in Kansas or Arkansas or Kentucky is swept away.

I read of a child who celebrated a birthday. It was a tragic kind of celebration for the child has been unconscious for four years. How much can a parent bear? Each time we visit in a nursing home we find many there who expect nothing but sickness until they die. What shall keep us from seeing ourselves small indeed?

One of my teachers maintains that every joy is half pain. The wonderful joy of unity in a Christian family is countered by the pain of separation. It is countered in the keenness of disappointment when a member of the family falls below his possibilities. I doubt the neat balance of joy and pain, but I know that sorrow and loss may leave [illegible] with loads of grief we feel we are too small to bea[r]

We see ourselves too small for work whi[ch] looms ahead. When this thing is so big, what c[an] I hope to do? The odds are so great. I get tired [of] working and working. I wonder if anybody realiz[es] what I have already done.

What is the cure? One can sometimes cheer [up] by main force. One can throw off self-pity by d[is]cipline to some degree. Most of us have no id[ea] how much we can take and it is more than we thin[k]. A new interest may give vitality to work.

But there is something better: to live in t[he] presence of Almighty God that we see ourselv[es] beside him in his greatness, his goodness, and h[is] purity. We are not too small because our God [is] able. He put us here for a purpose and the gat[es] of hell shall not prevail against it. There will b[e] plenty of work for we are to do his will and bui[ld] his Kingdom in the tough places: our marriage, ou[r] school, our business, our state, our churc[h]. Trouble will be painfully real. We shall be tire[d] but we shall not be alone.

Our Lord took it all the way: "Lo, I am wit[h] you always." And again, "Do not fear those wh[o] kill the body but cannot kill the soul . . . Ar[e] not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not on[e] of them will fall to the ground without your F[a]ther's will. But even the hairs of your head are a[ll] numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of mor[e] value than many sparrows." Too small? No. W[e] are God's children here so long as he gives [us] breath. And when we are taken from here we ar[e] still God's children.

We Christians ought never to be proud an[d] puffed up. We know the human race and ou[r] place in it too well for that. But when we ar[e] tempted to see ourselves too large, let us re[-] member God. We ought never to drop into th[e] depths of terror or despair. But when the burde[n] and the shock come, and with it the temptatio[n] to see ourselves too small, let us remember Go[d]. In the days ahead may the presence of Almight[y] God be very near us. For it is in the light o[f] his presence that we see our true size.

Blessed Mother

(Continued from page 5)

pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" with[-] reverence in their hearts for the God who send[s] us milkmen and supermarkets. So also we mus[t] not let a certain fanaticism about hearing the wor[d] of God and keeping it destroy the great importance of the blessed mother of our Lord. When she

redicted, "Behold, henceforth all generations will all me blessed," she meant our generation too. We nay call her "the blessed mother" without making demigoddess of her if we remember that the lessing came from God and that she was the gent of his will and his blessing. As "the blessed nother," she participates with us in the grace and lessing which Christ has brought.

When Western man threw off the rags of nature worship, says Gilbert Chesterton, he was able for the first time to turn to nature. St. Francis was able to write his "Canticle to the Sun" because he knew that the sun was not a divine being but a creature of the same God who had created and redeemed him. Only when Christianity had driven out the gods and goddesses of sex could it begin to give sex and marriage their due. And only when the various mother goddesses had been put safely to rest could Christianity afford to consider the mother of our Lord. In the life and devotion of many people she undoubtedly filled, and still fills, the void left by the departing goddesses. But in many other lives she has come to symbolize God's alternative to the whole company of celestial mothers. Jesus Christ is not the Christian Hercules, but the suffering servant of God. Thus his mother is not the Christian version of Diana of the Ephesians, but the maiden of Nazareth who was granted the grace to demonstrate in her life that it was not beneath God's dignity to be born a baby and be nourished at a mother's breasts. To paraphrase the text, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it, and therefore blessed is the womb that bore him!"

The Author of Birth

Blessed, therefore, are the mothers who bore us. Although Mary is the only woman mentioned in the Creed, our mothers are in the Creed too. For when we confess that we believe in God the Creator as our Creator, we acknowledge the divine process of which the psalmist speaks: "Thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works!" The praise belongs to God, and to God alone. Yet the psalmist does not forget the agent of birth in his praise for the Author of birth. In fact, only because he knows the Author of birth in his covenant of grace can he acknowledge the agent of birth and recognize her proper role.

Mother's Day is therefore an epitome of the highest art in the Christian life: to turn from the creature to the Creator, and then to turn back to the creature for the sake of the Creator. Mother goddesses — whether they be St. Mary or St. Mom — belong in the rubble of a civilization they helped to destroy. There is only one God, and he is not a mother. There is also only one Lord, and he had a mother! Because of him, and not because of herself, she was a blessed mother; for she heard the word of God spoken in him, and she kept it. We give thanks to God today for our mothers, who have heard the word of God and kept it. The blessed mother is the one who has heard and kept. The blessed child is the one who gives praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for what he has granted us through our mothers. We truly appreciate our mothers as blessed mothers if we do not ask their motherhood to assume a burden too heavy for it to bear. Knowing their weakness and ours, we call them blessed because of him who alone is blessed.

Be like a bird
That, pausing in her flight
Awhile on boughs too slight,
Feels them give way beneath her
And yet sings —
Knowing that she has wings!

Senate Prayer

IN THIS historic place, Almighty God, we pause a moment to ask Thy blessing ere we begin our day's work. Make us aware that Thou hast entrusted to this group the power of decision concerning the great issues of our day.

Create within them the awareness that without Thee they are not equal to the task. Make them mindful that the basis upon which they should govern is in accordance with the principles of truth, justice and honor. Remind them constantly that Thou art the source of truth; Thou art the fount of justice; Thou art the standard of honor. In Thee is to be found their help.

Eternal God, who art the source of all need, the rule of all action, be especially with the members of the Senate this day. Give them wisdom for their thinking, patience for their problems, understanding for their dealing in human relations, courage for their decisions and satisfaction for their work. Deliver them from any cowardice that turns its back on new truth; from any complacency that is content with half truth and from any pride that thinks it knows all the truth. Make them aware that they serve their country and their people best by keeping themselves close to Thee. Help them to live above the clamor of the crowd so that they may hear Thy "still, small voice" and follow its message. May this be their guide today and every day. In Thy name we pray. Amen. — *Presented before the United States Senate on March 5, 1959, by James Roy Smith, Mount Olivet Methodist Church, Arlington, Virginia.*

Funerals—Christian and Otherwise

By Richard E. Sigler

THE DAY has not yet dawned upon the clergyman who at sometime or another in his pastoral ministry has not conducted a funeral service. Death and taxes, a wise man once observed, are the only sure things in this world. One might think of other things just as certain; but suffice it to say, to every clergyman falls the privilege of conducting a Christian burial service for some one of God's children to whom the Creator has extended his beckoning hands.

Although death is universal, and the Christian faith has much to say on this problem, yet most of us "of the cloth" give too little thought to what happens in the mechanics of the church's service at the time of death. In baptism, the church has a procedure which is recommended. If followed and included as a part of a regular worship service, the form for the baptism and the service of which it is a part provide an awareness of God. Through all the distractions — crying babies, distraught parents, doting grandparents, a smiling and tittering congregation — God somehow makes his appearance.

With regard to weddings, communion and other similar services of the church, the pastor is consulted about the procedure and his opinion often is law. Our experience has shown us a few things conducive to making the Christian good news more of a reality in the lives of those vitally affected.

However, as regards the funeral — the climax of life, the transition into the joy of the eternal, the lifting of the veils of darkness and distress, ignorance and confusion, suffering and pain, heartache and sadness — at this point people turn elsewhere for advice. Pastors become necessary evils at a time when we ought to be ambassadors in a crisis. We are called *after* the cemetery custodian has been consulted as to whether or not he can have the grave open by 2:00 P.M. three days hence. We are called *after* the newspaper announcement has been phoned in. We are called *after* the second cousin in Kalamazoo has been notified and already has made his plane reservations to come east for the services. We are called *after* the casket has been chosen, the time of service selected, the form before and after our little part in the proceedings established. Naturally, through all this the funeral director has been the advisor of the distraught family, who in their sorrow and confusion plan the details by asking the funeral director, "What is generally done in this case?" If, by some quirk of fate, an original idea should evolve from the lips of the survivors — an idea which has a bit of merit as relates to the Christian practice of such things — the funeral director pulls out his secret weapon, the shocked and horrified gasp (yet clothed in the calm, cool and collected smile with which he has become known through the entire community); and in a quiet and syrupy tone he whispers, "It's not generally done this way — you wouldn't want to be (pause) different, would you?" God forbid that any American should be different at a time like this, for what is as important as having a "correct" funeral! Even Emily Post has quite a chapter on the subject which might well be subtitled, "How to Mourn Gracefully and with Composure."

First Thoughts

Obviously things are not quite this bad in every case, but in my ministry I have run into every one of the situations here combined into one. The point simply is this: in a time of death the first thoughts of the family turn to the funeral director. For the only time in the life of the family he enters the home and takes over in a manner that makes the Gestapo look like boys playing Sunday school. Here is the one certain experience of eternal life and it is ruled by one associated only with death. Here is an opportunity really to witness to God's resurrection; instead we place the emphasis up[on] the body from which the real pers[on] has long since been gone — gone sin[ce] the moment of cessation of physi[cal] life.

We must confess that this sad st[ate] of affairs is of our own making. [In] the first place, we do not prepa[re] our people for death. No mat[ter] how long a sick or dying one linge[rs] the death is still a shock and sorro[w] This leads to the confused-and-wa[iv]ing-widow type who is fair game f[or] any smooth undertaker. This pers[on] whom we have visited for months [on] end, bringing encouragement a[nd] hope, turns in her hour of decisi[on] to a complete stranger. I say th[is] is a condemnation upon our ow[n] heads. Either what we have be[en] selling is not very vital, or it do[es] not ring the bell for the ones wi[th] whom we work. The showdown com[es] when I get my phone call — how f[ar] down the line I happen to be [on] the list of people to call. If I a[m] called by the funeral director, I kno[w] before I get to the home that thin[gs] have already been fairly well planne[d] and that my task is only to see wheth[er] the deceased had a favorite hym[n] or poem that I might use in th[e] service (which, of course, will b[e] held in the air-conditioned comfo[rt] and "Rock-of-Ages-over-a-record-pla[y]er" background music found in eve[ry] modern funeral home).

There are those rare occasion[s] when we are privileged to keep th[e] long night vigil with the family a[s] death hovers near. However, the re[g]ular monthly meeting of the boa[rd] of trustees preceded by the speakin[g] engagement at Kiwanis, plus the pre[s]entation of the "good citizen award" to the local funeral director for h[is] work in raising the Salvation Arm[y] quota — this latter being held in th[e] Presbyterian Church — all these thing[s] keep us on the move, so that we ca[n] hardly spend an extended period o[f] time at the bedside of a dying sou[l]. This is one of the tragedies of th[e] day — plus the fact that so many mo[re] of our parishioners die in the unfami[l]iar surroundings of hospitals than a[t] home — that death is a thing feared for it is usually faced alone.

There are exceptions to every rul[e] and each of us knows the "ethical

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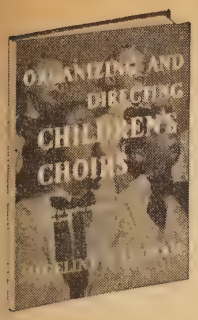
RICHARD E. SIGLER *is a graduate of Lafayette College and Western Theological Seminary which he now serves as director of admissions and registrar. Mr. Sigler was pastor of Centre Presbyterian Church, Loysville, and Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, New Bloomfield, both in Pennsylvania, before joining the staff of Western in 1958. The above article first appeared in the December 1958 issue of the seminary's bulletin,* Western Watch.



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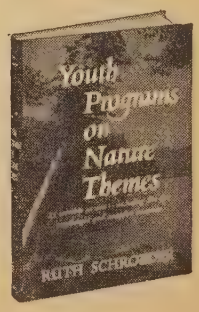

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funeral director; but it may be noted at this point that every funeral director has a tremendous investment in his business and reputation. He is "forced to give the people what they want" (to use his own words), and so we may or may not get very far with him. He prefers funerals in his funeral home, for he is set up for that. He does not have to transport chairs, let alone carry a casket to a church and move the front pew in order to have it fit. Moreover, since he has to serve not only United Presbyterians, but Jews, Roman Catholics, all other Protestant groups, plus the 40 per cent who have no church affiliation at all (but who are served just as readily as our ruling elder), it is no wonder that there is little to distinguish the procedures of funerals save the actual words which are peculiarly Protestant. The rituals both before and after are the same; and yet these seem to speak much more loudly than anything we can ever say or do — Scripture and prayer not excepted — so that one becomes more and more convinced of the futility of the situation.

Take the matter of the casket and body rituals. No words of Scripture or meditation, no presence of God in prayer, are able to compensate for the awful minute following a service when the funeral director tiptoes over to the next-of-kin and asks whether Aunt Jane would like to pull up the slumber robe. And so Aunt Jane, held up by Uncle George, moves up to the casket; and, as I stand by helpless except for that meaningful grip on Uncle George's shoulder — which is supposed to speak volumes — everyone of the family breaks down as Cousin Wilbur is tucked in. You cannot tell these folks that the real Wilbur is not lying in that casket. This is more than just a shell, a body. To the family, this *is* Wilbur; and this is the last time they will ever see him. This is the moment of triumph as the funeral director steps in, helps the family back to their seats, pulls the curtain and with his helper makes sure no speck of dust falls into the casket as he deftly closes it accompanied with a flick of his well-starched white handkerchief. (My heart leaped for joy one time when I noticed a fly sneak into the casket just before it was closed. I have often wondered if the process of decay has been hastened by that foreign body. If so, the manufacturers of vaults guaranteed forever may have a lawsuit on their hands in the year 2458 A.D.!)

Closing the casket following the service therefore seems to me to undo everything that might have been done through the service. It is unusual to hear people wail openly through a service as Scripture and prayer lift them above this whole situation; bu it is not unusual to find people wh fall completely apart when, followin the worship of God, they go forwar to worship the body of Cousin Wilbu

Much has been written about th practice of sending flowers. Someon has suggested that it is deplorabl that people pick up the phone an have a florist give the word of en couragement and hope that they them selves really ought to extend. Th is cause enough to eliminate flowe at a funeral — all except one or tw floral pieces which are symbolic an which might be provided by the fam ily. But the most distressing thin is the expense. I used to live acros a country dirt road from a cemeter which has been used for well ove two hundred years. Some of the tomb stones go back that far. I observe day by day what happens to flower for which people have paid hard earned money. They lie on the grav (being considered a nuisance by th funeral director who must buy a spe cial six thousand dollar vehicle t transport them, and by the caretake of the cemetery who must dispose of them) and hundreds of dollar are lost forever. They are beautiful but think what beauty for posterity might be built in lives were this mone to be used in a living way. Ove this sort of practice clergymen have no control, nor dare we raise our voices even when we see it carried to extremes.

And what has been the influence in our life that has taken the funeral service from the church to the funeral home? The older members of our congregations remember well when every funeral was held in the church or the home. Our Scotch forebears had every funeral in the church building just after the body had been reverently laid to rest in the nearby grave. They returned to the church for a service of praise to God. How fitting this sounds! But in 1958 who ever hears of having the committal first and then going back to the church — it is just not done!

Other Practices

There are other practices which have grown up through our default. One is reflected in the simple fact that the undertaker is first of all a businessman with a big investment at stake. He knows how to advertise in a way to be dignified and get his point across. We thank him for the fans he contributes to our church, and we welcome them because they are imprinted with the 23rd Psalm and a six-color picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. We are relieved when he prints the tickets and programs for our church supper. We even rejoice when he offers his portable chairs which are stenciled on the back, "Funeral Home of Joe Doe — We specialize in the Body-Beautiful." We have done much to implant in the minds of our people the closeness we feel to our funeral

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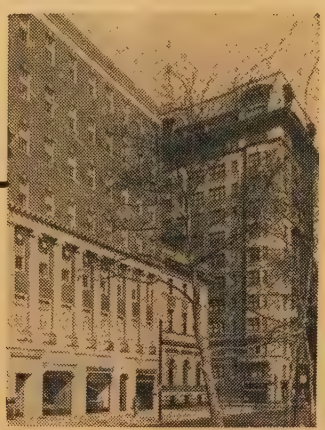

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director friend, and by our silence we place the real stamp of approval upon his funeral practices.

There are multitudes of other things which might be considered, but each situation is different. We do have on our church boards fine Christian funeral directors. There are those who deplore these things as much as we do. However, let us look positively at the things we can do which will help our people meet the funeral situation:

1. Think through objectively everything that takes place in death and the average funeral. Most of us give this too little thought, for we leave the details to the undertaker. We just hope he comes by to pick us up at 1:50 P.M. Evaluate the steps he takes. Evaluate the things the pastor does. How do these help present the Christian gospel of resurrection? How do they promote the real Kingdom of God? Wherein could expenses be cut so that people's sense of values will not be tied up in seven hundred dollar caskets (when their annual pledge to the church is fifty dollars)? What is the relationship of the funeral director to the church, to the Kingdom of God? These involve judgments, but choices and judgments must be made.

2. Talk over the problems with other clergymen. This cannot be a one-man crusade. Discuss it in clerical groups. See if this is not of sufficient importance to ask for the appointment of a committee to study the problem and make definite recommendations so that we will not stand alone but will have some real operating standards. The Roman brethren are not dictated to by the funeral directors in the realm; there is no reason why the Protestants should sit bac and become accomplices to one the greatest rackets perpetrated the Christian church. When a ma spends one thousand dollars at gambling table we become concerne When the same man spends one tho sand five hundred dollars at his fune al we say, "How beautiful."

3. Instruct our people as to th steps to take in case of death. A them to give us a call at the sam time they call the funeral directo That way we can talk over the detai of the service — time, place, open closed casket, etc. — with the othe involved.

4. Preach sermons on the subjec The second sermon I preached i a former parish was on this subjec That way I was not offending anyon for I had not yet had a funeral, an I did not know people well enoug to know who was about to have on Neither did I know the undertakers so there was nothing personal ther (although as one heard of my sermon he thought there surely was). Peopl must think this matter through; an although to most it is an unpleasan subject which is shunned like th plague, it must be faced by everyon at some time or another.

5. Talk over the problem with the session or council. Perhaps som standards can be established whic will help with the future funerals Being friendly with the funeral direc tors, the session can help interpre both his thoughts and the thought of the church leadership.

6. Talk with the funeral director — friendly and frankly. Clear the air early and relations will be much better when each knows what the other thinks and feels.

Recommendations

What things may be recommended for funerals?

1. Funeral in the church. This is where most Christians are baptized, where they unite with the fellowship of God, where their Christian educa tion takes place, where they marry, where they receive the Sacraments of Grace, where they pray. Why take their memorial service to a place asso ciated with death only and where even the non-Christian feels at home?

2. If possible, have the committal service first. A graveside committal with only the family and minister and funeral director present seems to me to help eliminate emphasis upon the body.

3. Following the graveside service, let everybody assemble in the church for a memorial service consisting of Scripture and prayer — with perhaps poetry. A sermon would be fitting and this is all done now without the distraction of a corpse which must be disposed of.

4. In event of the corpse being present, make sure the casket is closed *before* any service. It is just as easy to do it then, and it does not negate

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y positive affirmation of the gospel life which may be getting through the people assembled.

5. Consider seriously the wisdom of emation. Expense-wise it is ideal. ne average cost of cremation is sixty llars for an adult body. Outside newspaper announcements, phone lls and transportation, the funeral rector's bill can be kept to less than ne hundred dollars. Could not the ristian causes in Korea or Detroit West Washington Township use e difference between three hundred nd thirteen hundred dollars?

6. Raise questions about the costs cemetery plots (running into hunreds of dollars) and tombstones often costing thousands). What is ne most lasting type of memorial? o we really believe that it is not ade of stone?

7. Finally, as we examine our funeral practices and motives, ask God's uidance that we may be his instruments to bring some Christian light to is un-Christian situation. We condemn war as being against God's will; e deplore gambling, materialism, atred and so on. Perhaps God could e calling us to look at a situation hich costs millions of dollars each ear, which adds nothing to the Christian faith of most people, which rather detracts greatly from the true Christian faith of most individuals and which if guided rightly could be a means of bringing untold numbers o Christ. There is no greater opportunity for witness than in death!

Book Reviews

COMMUNISM AND THE THEOLOGIANS. *By Charles C. West. Westminster. $6.00.*

HERE is a very good book. It is not only a brilliant study of the Christian encounter with communism, but it contains an able analysis of how theology determines social opinion in the works of our major theologians. Charles West taught in China during the communist encroachment and lived for two years in the "island" of West Berlin. He has an immediate knowledge not only of communist "dogma" but of its political strategy. Moreover, he conveys to us the terrible need of a Christian theological dynamic to counter the evident zeal of communist heresy.

The book discusses such sturdy minds as Brunner, Hromadka, Tillich, Berdyaev, Reinhold Niebuhr, Barth, Gollwitzer and Bonhoeffer, with excursions in the direction of Bishop Berecsky and even John Foster Dulles. With care, Dr. West examines the theological stance and political perspectives of each. He comes to the conclusion that, of all, Karl Barth best supplies a theological outlook for Christians who must contend with communism. Yet, he does not deny the political truancy of Barth. I suppose what Dr. West wishes is a theological "paragon" equipped with the political realism of Reinhold Niebuhr, who spies the subtle idolatry in every human system, and with the radical christocentricity of Karl Barth, who sees every human crisis as an occasion for redemption. Dr. West is concerned that Christianity be not confused with any ideology but transect all ideologies with judgment, mercy, and, above all, saving power.

The book is well written and, considering the complexity of the study, clear and ordered. It is a dispassionate study in that Dr. West does not succumb to an unreasoned rejection of communism. But it is passionate in that he demands an appropriate Christian witness to redeem communism rather than to destroy it by power, economic pressure or political warfare. According to Dr. West, "the communist longs for human values which are not available in his party or society," and it is to this longing that the Christian must speak.

I am not sure that the author has

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been quite fair in his appraisal of Paul Tillich whom he criticizes for being encased in an ontology. A similar criticism might be made of Barth who never steps out of his *Heilsgeschichte* enough to be politically relevant.

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This book is particularly exciting when Dr. West deals with the Christian's day-to-day contact with individual communists; when he pleads a Christian "ministry" to communist peoples; when he urges the Christian use of "powerlessness" as a witness. Charles West does not simply dissect ideology and theology. Behind his words is a concern felt for the peoples of Europe and Asia who of necessity are giving expression to faith in the face of revolutionary force. — *David G. Buttrick, First Presbyterian Church, Fredonia, New York.*

THE VICTOR SPEAKS. *By Edmund Schlink. Translated by Paul F. Koehneke. Concordia. $2.50.*

FEW, too few sermons and books of sermons follow classic themes. In the marketplace they need catchy titles for advertisement and clever phrases for diversion. Can such sermons carry the weight of glory which the Christian gospel warrants and assumes? Classic sermons, of course, stand the chance of being dull, of creating the impression that one has heard and seen and known too often and too well. Professor Edmund Schlink of Heidelberg leans toward the weighty and the stolid. But not only as counteractive; also in its own right his book of sermons deserves its place in the springtime sun.

Not for a moment does the preacher waver from the conviction that he knows no other God than the o who has revealed himself in Jes Christ. Not for a second does t reader find it possible to avoid co centration on the cross of sufferin or necessary to evade concentrati on the empty tomb of victory. N for years is one likely to find su single-mindedness in a sermon quence. Seven homilies spring fro sources in "words from the cross Eight others are "words of the ris Lord." This is not the place to fi clever illustrations or snappy stori for preachers to tell. It is the pla to find much more. I have read t original; the translation is heavy b faithful. All in all, a moving wor — *M. E. M.*

THE MARKS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATIO *By F. Gerald Ensley. The Metho ist Publishing House.*

THE DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN EDUC TION. *By Iris V. Cully. Westminste $3.75.*

THE PROMISE OF SCIENCE AND TH POWER OF FAITH. *By M. Holm Hartshorne. Westminster. $3.00.*

THESE three books deal with cu rent trends and problems Christian education. The first tw deal specifically with the nature an function of Christian education, as th titles imply. The third deals not s much with Christian education *per* as with trends in scientific thinkin in relationship to the Christian faith

The Marks of Christian Educatio is by a bishop in The Methodi Church, Bishop F. Gerald Ensley. Th marrow of the book grew out of th Mendenhall Lectures given at DePau University and the Willson Lecture presented to the Methodist Board c Education at Scarritt College. Th main thesis of the book is that Chris tian education must be both Christia and educational.

In the preface the author says, "Th purpose of these pages is to sketc what the 'Christian' half of Christia education entails. I have tried to sa that any institution of higher learnin that really educates is Christian if th quest for knowledge is motivated b the Christian world view, is manne by Christian personnel, and culmi nates in integration of meaning an character and that at-homeness in th universe which is ever the sign of thos who have sat at the feet of the Grea Teacher."

This is one of the best books I have read on the nature and purpose o Christian nurture. I was especially de lighted with the author's penetrating analysis of our current emphasis o scientific training. He examined it i the light of the Christian faith and found it lacking in essentia ingredients.

The Dynamics of Christian Educa tion is also an excellent book. In it Dr. Cully digs down to the very roots of our Christian faith. She places Christian education in the setting o the Christian church and in the tradi-

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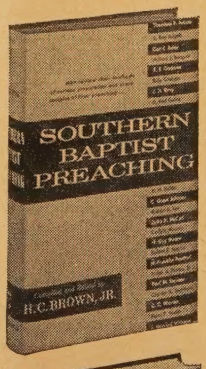

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n of the Christian gospel. Christian ucation to her is not some little in- nificant phase of the church pro- am known as Sunday school. It is uch larger than that, although that extremely important. Christian edu- tion has the same dynamics as our ristian faith and has perspectives d concerns as far-reaching as the ristian church.

Both books are well-thought-out dis- urses on the subject, well written, d packed with contemporary mean- g. I am sorry I cannot say the same r *The Promise of Science and the ower of Faith,* but I could not find ; relevant significance. — *J. Edward antz, National Council of Churches, tlanta, Georgia.*

OWER IN PREACHING. *By W. E. Sang- ster. Abingdon. $2.25.*

PEECH IN THE PULPIT. *By P. E. Sang- ster. Philosophical Library. $2.75.*

DR. SANGSTER is an eloquent Methodist who hails from Great ritain. He has written several books n the subject of preaching and here dds another to the list. This brief olume is for the parson who feels ss than effective in the pulpit and ants "power in preaching." Dr. angster has seven short chapters in hich he urges faith, theological focus, ard work, simplicity, directness, fer- or and prayer. What he has to say s not fiercely original: it has been aid before. But what he says he ays well, with conviction and style.

On the subject of theological focus he pleads that preaching be centered on elemental Christian doctrine rather than on peripheral topics. He insists that no man can preach unless he has been grasped by a real faith in Christ and can speak from true conviction. All in all, this is a slim and satisfactory book.

Mr. P. E. Sangster is the son of W. E. and a teacher of elocution in Great Britain. This little book is a guide to better speech practice and is prepared for preachers by a true-to-life P. K. Much of the material is of a technical nature and is designed to assist those with defined speech difficulties. However, there is a dandy chapter on "Reading the Scriptures" which might be required reading for all who grip the lectern. Some of Mr. Sangster's advice struck me as simply hilarious. He suggests a test of relaxation: ". . . ask a friend to test you. If he pulls your big toe hard and your head doesn't shake, you are relaxed." I am considering one of my church officers as a weekly "toe-puller" to prepare me for the preaching of the gospel. Nevertheless if you are in difficulty, this book might help. — *David G. Buttrick, First Presbyterian Church, Fredonia, New York.*

Pulpit Calendar

May 3 — Rural Life Sunday.
May 3-10 — National Family Week.
May 7 — Ascension Day.
May 10 — Festival of the Christian Home. (Mother's Day).
May 17 — Whitsunday. (Pentecost).
May 24 — Trinity Sunday.
May 30 — Memorial Day.
May 31 — 2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 7 — 3rd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 14 — 4th Sunday after Pentecost.
June 21 — 5th Sunday after Pentecost.
June 28 — Independence Sunday. Nature Sunday.
July 4 — Independence Day.
July 5 — 7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 12 — 8th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 19 — 9th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 26 — 10th Sunday after Pentecost.

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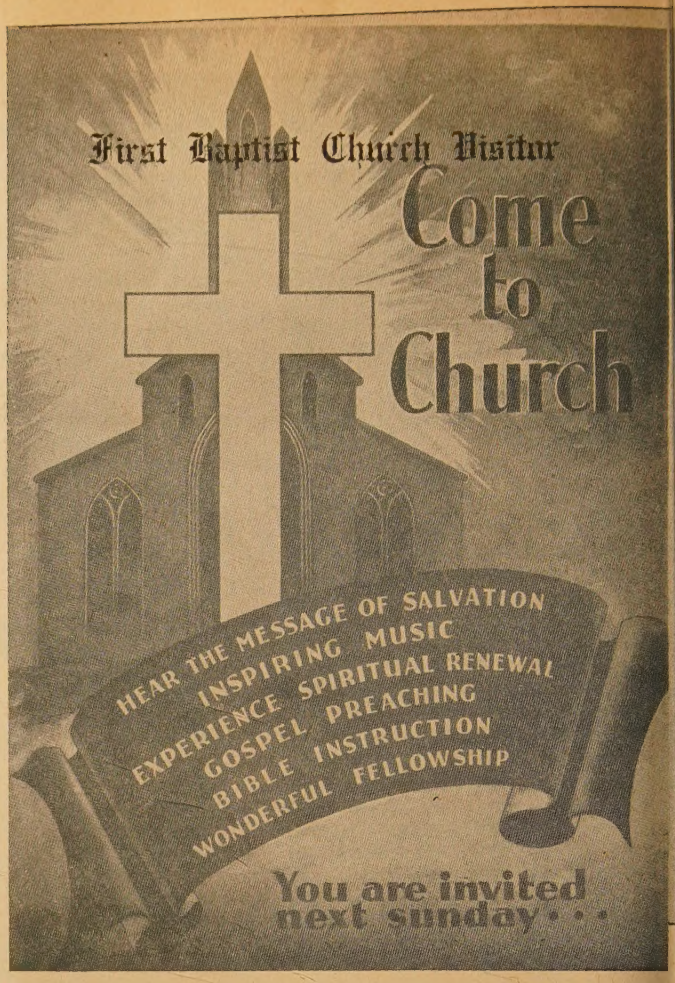

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